



July 13, 2011

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We are writing today to express concern and alarm regarding recently reported ties between your live-in girlfriend, Food Network celebrity Sandra Lee, and the petroleum industry. We believe it's time that the Cuomo administration take steps to ensure transparency in regard to its dealings with this industry, especially since the entire nation is watching to see what New York state will do regarding natural gas fracking.

A July 6, 2011 *Wall Street Journal* article, "First Couple Show Limits of Law"¹, notes that Ms. Lee does not have to report her income under state law because you and Ms. Lee are not married. The same article reports strong ties between Ms. Lee and the pharmaceutical and beverage industries, both of which are actively lobbying your office on matters ranging from the state budget to tax issues.

As a group that is asking for a ban on fracking in New York and beyond, even more troubling to us is mention in the article that Ms. Lee spoke at a "conference of petroleum executives" in Florida in March, and that neither your office nor Ms. Lee's representatives have disclosed the group's identity.

We are only left to speculate on that question. One group that held a meeting at the same hotel as Ms. Lee's appearance in March 2011 was National Fuel Gas Company, which according to SEC filings held its annual shareholders meeting at the Ritz Carlton in Naples, Fla. on March 10². The company sells and transports natural gas throughout Western New York and Pennsylvania³. One day earlier, the company's subsidiary, Seneca Resources,

¹ *Wall Street Journal*,
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304803104576428154187724700.htm>
1. Viewed on July 12, 2011.

² National Fuel Gas Co. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Proxy Statement Schedule 14A. January 21; online at
<http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/70145/000095012311004321/l41330def14a.htm>

³ Company Web site: <http://www.nationalfuelgas.com/AboutUs.aspx>, viewed on July 12, 2011.

divested itself of its Gulf of Mexico oil and gas assets in favor of developing properties in the Marcellus Shale⁴.

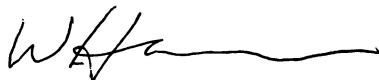
Further troubling is that the source of the *Wall Street Journal* article, a blog by Star Talent Inc., was originally posted in late March⁵ and apparently removed and reposted, substituting the word “petroleum” with “corporate” executives⁶. One might wonder: Did the scrutiny brought to bear on Ms. Lee from the *Wall Street Journal* article prompt her representation to attempt to obscure the dealings with the petroleum industry regarding the event?

One might also wonder why a “conference of petroleum executives” would have interest in a Food Network personality. The question of whether or not a greater motive is at play will hang over your head until Ms. Lee discloses, openly and transparently, the sources of her income from such speaking appearances.

This is just the latest in transparency problems regarding your governance of the state. During the campaign, you pledged to make your meeting schedule transparent, but have not done so. You have also not made your tour dates public. If you did, you might witness hundreds or thousands of people turning out to tell you that they want a ban on gas fracking in the state.

Your leadership in New York reverberates throughout the nation. As a powerful state, federal agencies and affected communities around the country are watching what unfolds there regarding fracking regulations. You are also a prominent leader with known ambitions beyond the state. That is why we urge you to address these transparency problems, starting with disclosing the sources of Sandra Lee’s petroleum industry income.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Hauter', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wenonah Hauter
Executive Director

⁴ Company Web site: <http://investor.nationalfuelgas.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=90873&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1537828&highlight=>, viewed on July 12, 2011.

⁵ Blog was posted to Star Talent Inc.’s Facebook page on March 31, 2011 at 10:42 p.m.: <http://www.facebook.com/StarTalentInc?sk=wall&filter=12> Viewed on July 12, 2011.

⁶ Star Talent Inc.’s blog at <http://blog.startalentinc.com/2011/06/12/food-networks-sandra-lee/>, viewed July 12, 2011.